



The Attaignant Consort
Kate Clark – Cantus
Amanda Markwick – Altus
João Carlos Santos – Tenor
Giuditta Isoldi - Bassus

The Attaignant Consort's 3-CD set documenting the history and repertoire of the renaissance transverse flute was awarded a Diapason d'Or in 2013, and marked the ensemble as a leading exponent of this still little-known instrument.

All members of the ensemble are specialists on historical flutes from the renaissance to the romantic periods, coming together as the Attaignant Consort to share their deep love of the poetry, music, and spirit of the Renaissance. Starting from facsimiles of original manuscripts and printed part-books, the consort performs its programmes from memory, reflecting the aural tradition of sixteenth-century instrumental practice, and freeing the musicians to improvise on the works, as their historical counterparts did.

<https://www.attaignantconsort.com>

The Musical Heart of Luther

Programme description

This programme weaves congregational song (in which the listeners are invited to join us!) in among polyphonic works of sacred and secular origin, and celebrates creative cross-fertilisation between different musical cultures and social groupings of sixteenth-century Europe, in folk songs, hymns, motets, and lute songs, largely (but not entirely) in instrumental renditions.

Musicians

4 flutes

1 lute

1 organ (optional)

Context and relevance

Religious identity in the sixteenth century would forge – as it still does today – political alliances and pacts, and trigger executions and wars, in order to carve out domains both territorial and doctrinal, that would include the righteous and exclude the rest. John Calvin distrusted music for its power to undermine the primacy of God’s word in the liturgy. For Huldrych Zwingli, religious music was popish – esteemed in the Roman church, composed on Latin texts, and incomprehensible to the congregation.

Happily, for Martin Luther’s congregations, and for us today who still relish the music of the European Renaissance, Luther’s view of music was open and inclusive. Its role in the Bible over-rode its association with the Catholic church. Luther wrote to Ludwig Senfl in 1530 that “the prophets made use of no art but music.” His preferences for the music of the church embraced the polyphony of Catholic composers like Josquin des Prez and Heinrich Isaac, the singing of psalms with all of their verses, and also included German folk hymns – *Leisen* – that he adopted and adapted for congregational singing in the church. It was Luther who introduced congregational song, in the vernacular, into the Mass. This was to have a profound influence on liturgical practice that has endured until today. The effect on Luther’s congregation must have been extraordinary, perhaps in particular for girls and women, whose voices in the church were the subject of ancient taboos, and whose silence was specifically prescribed by St. Paul.

Highlights

- Martin Luther’s own hymns ***O welt ich muss dich lassen*** (his adaptation of Heinrich Isaac’s ***Innsbruck ich muss dich lassen***), ***Ein Feste Burg*** (here, reworked by our lutenist), and ***Was mein Gott will*** (which inspired Claudin de Sermisy’s ***Il me suffit de tous mes maux***)
- ***So wünsch ich dir ein gute nacht*** and ***Ach lieb mit leid*** - from *Frische Teutsche Liedlein*, by Georg Forster, whose choice of appropriate songs for the collection was influenced by his friend Luther
- ***Guretzsch*** and ***La My La Sol***, superb example of Isaac’s instrumental writing
- The light-hearted ***Nun Treiben wir den Papst heraus***, an anonymous popular song about getting rid of the pope, and ***Pastyme with good companye***, a song attributed to king Henry VIII himself, who led the English Reformation for famously other motivations than Luther’s
- Polyphonic works including ***Ich stund an einem morgen***, Heinrich Finck’s setting of the popular folksong, and ***De tout mon coeur t’exalteray***, Sweelinck’s magnificent setting of the simple Dutch hymn ***Ik zal met al mijn hart***